Caltrans

Water Quality NewsFlash

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TMDLs - *State issues draft policy and guidance* – The State Water Resources Control Board has been active in developing guidance and policies related to total maximum daily loads (TMDL), the 303(d) list, and related water quality issues. In September 2004, the State Board adopted the final *Water Quality Control Policy For Developing California's Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List.* This policy identifies the factors that the state will use to list or delist waters/pollutants on the 303(d) list of impaired waterways. This list is required by section 303 of the federal Clean Water Act. A TMDL must be prepared to allocate a "safe loading" of pollutants to wastewater dischargers and other sources releasing pollutants to the listed waterways. This policy is posted at: http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/tmdl/303d_listing.html

As reported in the last *NewsFlash*, the Board has also scheduled three "listening sessions" in January as it begins development of the *Policy for the Implementation of the Storm Water Program* (http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/stormwtr/index.html). This policy will likely address TMDLs and the 303(d) list as they relate to stormwater discharges.

Now the State Board has issued two new draft documents for review. The first is a lengthy guidance document intended to serve as a handbook for TMDL practitioners: *State of California SB 469 TMDL Guidance – A Process for Addressing Impaired Waters in California*. This guidance provides a detailed description of the TMDL process including the preparation of implementation plans. In addition, the state has issued a policy to implement the regulatory aspects of the guidance: *Water Quality Control Policy for addressing Impaired Waters: Regulatory Structure and Options*. This draft policy outlines regulatory options to be considered by State Board and the Regional Boards in developing TMDLs. The goal is to establish a state-wide standardized approach for developing and adopting TMDLs. For example, it shows how the state will address situations when "standards may be inappropriate or imprecise, thus rendering water quality attainment impossible unless standards are modified." A hearing on the policy (and possibly also the guidance) will be held January 4, 2005 in Sacramento. Final action will be taken at a later meeting. Comments are due December 24. http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/tmdl/tmdl.html

Pollutant Trends – *USGS finds increases and decreases* – The U.S. Geological Survey has analyzed cores from 42 lakes and reservoirs across the nation to determine historical trends in pollutants since the 1960s. Sediment concentrations of zinc, possibly from car and truck tires, have increased over time. Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), which are automotive combustion by-products, have also been increasing. (USGS researchers are also looking at PAHs released from some parking lot sealants.) The metals cadmium, lead, chromium, and nickel have decreased over time as well as the banned pesticide DDT and PCBs, which were previously used in electrical equipment. TMDLs may be able to take these trends into account during the process of modeling waterway loadings and developing implementation plans to reduce the loadings to safe levels. The full "42 lakes" study has not yet been published. More information on the USGS National Water-Quality Assessment (NAWQA) Program: http://tx.usgs.gov/coring/index.htm

WQ NewsFlash is a weekly update of storm water and related news for the Department. *Verify information before taking action on these bulletins*. Contact Betty Sanchez, Betty_Sanchez@dot.ca.gov (916) 653-2115, or Fred Krieger, (510) 843-7889, fkrieger@msn.com with questions or to be added or deleted from e-mail list. Posted online at: http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/env/stormwater/publicat/newsflash/index.htm